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## Sophia Starling: Diary Entry

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## *Sophia Starling: Diary Entry*

Mr. Sprockett has gone to sleep,  
and the stranger who wandered in  
from yet another of the blizzards  
that keep us imprisoned.  
Mr. Crane's fists screamed frost-bite  
when he pounded on the door,  
his head a battering ram of desperation.  
He claimed to be a convalescing consumptive  
sent west by the dean of his seminary—  
dry mountains a miracle for his lungs.

We bid him share our dwindling stores  
and saw trouble immediately:  
a hunger to devour everything;  
I sense he has fed like a locust  
on the supplies of others,  
why he was put out in such fatal weather.  
He apologized that recovery forces him  
to eat like blood-drunk wolves.  
A hunger in his eyes as well:  
he stared, then quickly shifted,  
seeing Mr. Sprockett's one eye  
on him, jagged as a blade.

For the sake of safety, I asked  
about Boston's opera house,  
its climate and leading citizens.  
Mr. Crane talked only of London,  
averred it the one place in the world  
a civilised man would call home.  
"Or lady," he smiled, more oil  
than blood in his lips.

"You'd best turn in,"  
Mr. Sprockett rose, huge and grim  
as the bear that had etched  
terrible claws down his face.  
There *will* be trouble, only I can avert,  
but how, I keep accusing myself.

*by Robert Cooperman*

Cooperman's poems are from *The Badman and the Lady* soon to be  
published by Basfol Books.  
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